

**Maine Revised Statutes**  
**Title 17-A: MAINE CRIMINAL CODE**  
**Chapter 5: DEFENSES AND AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES; JUSTIFICATION**

**§107. PHYSICAL FORCE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT**

1. A law enforcement officer is justified in using a reasonable degree of nondeadly force upon another person:

A. When and to the extent that the officer reasonably believes it necessary to effect an arrest or to prevent the escape from custody of an arrested person, unless the officer knows that the arrest or detention is illegal; or [ 2003, c. 143, §3 (AMD) . ]

B. In self-defense or to defend a 3rd person from what the officer reasonably believes to be the imminent use of unlawful nondeadly force encountered while attempting to effect such an arrest or while seeking to prevent such an escape. [ 2007, c. 173, §23 (AMD) . ]

[ 2007, c. 173, §23 (AMD) . ]

2. A law enforcement officer is justified in using deadly force only when the officer reasonably believes such force is necessary:

A. For self-defense or to defend a 3rd person from what the officer reasonably believes is the imminent use of unlawful deadly force; or [ 2007, c. 173, §23 (AMD) . ]

B. To effect an arrest or prevent the escape from arrest of a person when the law enforcement officer reasonably believes that the person has committed a crime involving the use or threatened use of deadly force, is using a dangerous weapon in attempting to escape or otherwise indicates that the person is likely to endanger seriously human life or to inflict serious bodily injury unless apprehended without delay; and

(1) The law enforcement officer has made reasonable efforts to advise the person that the officer is a law enforcement officer attempting to effect an arrest or prevent the escape from arrest and the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the person is aware of this advice; or

(2) The law enforcement officer reasonably believes that the person to be arrested otherwise knows that the officer is a law enforcement officer attempting to effect an arrest or prevent the escape from arrest.

For purposes of this paragraph, "a reasonable belief that another has committed a crime involving use or threatened use of deadly force" means such reasonable belief in facts, circumstances and the law that, if true, would constitute such an offense by that person. If the facts and circumstances reasonably believed would not constitute such an offense, an erroneous but reasonable belief that the law is otherwise justifies the use of deadly force to make an arrest or prevent an escape. [ 2007, c. 173, §23 (AMD) . ]

[ 2007, c. 173, §23 (AMD) . ]

3. A private person who has been directed by a law enforcement officer to assist the officer in effecting an arrest or preventing an escape from custody is justified in using:

A. A reasonable degree of nondeadly force when and to the extent that the private person reasonably believes such to be necessary to carry out the officer's direction, unless the private person believes the arrest is illegal; or [ 2003, c. 143, §3 (AMD) . ]

B. Deadly force only when the private person reasonably believes such to be necessary for self-defense or to defend a 3rd person from what the private person reasonably believes to be the imminent use of unlawful deadly force, or when the law enforcement officer directs the private person to use deadly force and the private person believes the officer is authorized to use deadly force under the circumstances. [2007, c. 173, §23 (AMD).]

[ 2007, c. 173, §23 (AMD) .]

**4.** A private person acting on that private person's own is justified in using:

A. A reasonable degree of nondeadly force upon another person when and to the extent that the private person reasonably believes it necessary to effect an arrest or detention that is lawful for the private person to make or prevent the escape from such an arrest or detention; or [2007, c. 173, §23 (AMD) .]

B. Deadly force only when the private person reasonably believes such force is necessary:

(1) To defend the person or a 3rd person from what the private citizen reasonably believes to be the imminent use of unlawful deadly force; or

(2) To effect a lawful arrest or prevent the escape from such arrest of a person who in fact:

(a) Has committed a crime involving the use or threatened use of deadly force, or is using a dangerous weapon in attempting to escape; and

(b) The private citizen has made reasonable efforts to advise the person that the citizen is a private citizen attempting to effect an arrest or prevent the escape from arrest and has reasonable grounds to believe the person is aware of this advice or the citizen reasonably believes that the person to be arrested otherwise knows that the citizen is a private citizen attempting to effect an arrest or prevent the escape from arrest. [2003, c. 143, §3 (AMD) .]

[ 2007, c. 173, §23 (AMD) .]

**5.** Except where otherwise expressly provided, a corrections officer, corrections supervisor or law enforcement officer in a facility where persons are confined, pursuant to an order of a court or as a result of an arrest, is justified in using deadly force against such persons under the circumstances described in subsection 2. The officer or another individual responsible for the custody, care or treatment of those persons is justified in using a reasonable degree of nondeadly force when and to the extent the officer or the individual reasonably believes it necessary to prevent any escape from custody or to enforce the rules of the facility.

[ 1995, c. 215, §2 (AMD) .]

**5-A.** A corrections officer, corrections supervisor or law enforcement officer is justified in using deadly force against a person confined in the Maine State Prison when the officer or supervisor reasonably believes that deadly force is necessary to prevent an escape from custody. The officer or supervisor shall make reasonable efforts to advise the person that if the attempt to escape does not stop immediately, deadly force will be used. This subsection does not authorize any corrections officer, corrections supervisor or law enforcement officer who is not employed by a state agency to use deadly force.

[ 2003, c. 143, §3 (AMD) .]

**6.**

[ 1975, c. 740, §32 (RP) .]

7. Use of force that is not justifiable under this section in effecting an arrest does not render illegal an arrest that is otherwise legal and the use of such unjustifiable force does not render inadmissible anything seized incident to a legal arrest.

[ 1975, c. 499, §1 (NEW) .]

8. Nothing in this section constitutes justification for conduct by a law enforcement officer or a private person amounting to an offense against innocent persons whom the officer or private person is not seeking to arrest or retain in custody.

[ 2003, c. 143, §3 (AMD) .]

#### SECTION HISTORY

1975, c. 499, §1 (NEW). 1975, c. 740, §§28-33 (AMD). 1979, c. 512, §23 (AMD). 1989, c. 18, §§2,3 (AMD). 1989, c. 502, §§C5,C6 (AMD). 1995, c. 215, §§2,3 (AMD). 2003, c. 143, §3 (AMD). 2007, c. 173, §23 (AMD).

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